

HO 739, Davis Mills,  
before 1850, ca. 1870.  
Ellicott City vicinity, Ilchester area, private access.  
Capsule Summary, page 1.

Description:

Six distinct architectural features survive of the Davis Mills complex, here designated A through F. Feature A is a dry-laid granite revetment wall set at the south bank of Bonnie Branch. Above this stood the foundation remains of the southernmost of the two original Davis Mills, destroyed in 1998. Feature B is a rough-cut granite dam abutment standing on the north bank of Bonnie Branch; it probably once secured a wooden dam (before 1850). Building C is a two-story dwelling with rough-cut granite walls and ashlar coins and lintels. Three bays of fenestration face Bonnie Branch road, and a large frame addition extends to the north. This structure, recently rebuilt as a residence, was originally a second mill building, and likely dates to the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Building D is also a dwelling, and was, at least in part, contemporaneous with Building C. It is a frame house covered in asbestos shingles, and is set on a high English basement of rough-cut granite with ashlar coins. Structure E is a dam, ca. 1870, built of ashlar blocks, repaired with rough-cut granite and a cap of poured

HO 739, Davis Mills,  
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Capsule Summary, page 2.

concrete. Feature F is an extensive head race cut into the hillside  
above Buildings C and D.

Significance:

The Davis Mills in a sense mark a contrary trend in the Patapsco Valley. This enterprise was always a small-scale installation, providing lumber, flour, and meal for the local market. Services such as these were initially offered by the merchant mills at Ellicott City, but over the second half of the nineteenth century, these large facilities dropped small-scale--or country--services in favor of consolidated operations. George Ellicott, Jr., of Ilchester sold Davis the site for these small-scale facilities, and they would have provided needed products for the Ilchester community that Ellicott was fostering. The earliest documented appearance of the Joshua Davis Mills is the 1850 Manufacturers' Census. Between 1860 and 1878, Davis expanded the complex by added a second dam upstream of the first, and for this constructed the head race still visible. It is likely that at this time the dwelling? (Building D) and

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before 1850, ca. 1870.  
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Capsule Summary, page 3.

a new stone mill (Building C) were constructed. The closure of  
nearby factories and the suburbanization of the surrounding  
community, with the concomitant growth of ready made products,  
made the services offered at Davis no longer necessary.

HO-739  
Davis Mills  
Howard County  
Jennifer Goold  
May 16, 2005

## ADDENDUM

The purpose of this Addendum is to add a copy of the text that John McGrain prepared documenting the Davis Grist Mill (4450 Bonnie Branch Road) as well as additional photographs of the property, a sketched floor plan of the building, a copy of a newspaper article that has an historic photo of the building, and current owner information.

The converted mill building is now owned by:

Bryan and Barbara Rowe  
4450 Bonnie Branch Road  
Ellicott City, MD 21043  
browe@jhmi.edu

John McGrain also documented the building in his **Molinography of Maryland**:

"The 1850 census of manufactures listed Joshua Davis with a water mill worth \$100; 2 employees; 2 pair of burrs; annual output of 4000 bushels of corn and chop worth \$2500.

The mill was probably under lease to Davis because in April 1857, George and Agnes Ellicott sold three acres on Bonnie Branch to Joshua B. Davis. The tract names mentioned in the deed were Caleb's Vineyard, Ellicott's Park, and Hayward's Discovery. The deed mentioned Bonny Branch and the mouth of the tail race. This deed had no "same as" clause. Presumably the mill was built by George Ellicott who also owned the nearby Dismal Mill on Patapsco Falls downstream of the Thistle Factory (Deeds WHW 18:362).

The 1860 Simon J. Martenet map of Howard County showed the grist and saw mill of J. Davis on this site. The *Maryland Farmer* for April 1872 (9:121) reported that Joshua B. Davis sold his grist and saw mill and appurtenances, with three or four acres of land attached, located on Bonny Branch near Ilchester in Howard County, to Alexander Esler for the sum of \$6000. The actual deed is from Joshua B. and Rebecca Davis to Matilda Esler, April 13, 1872, for \$6,000 (Deeds WHW 32:285).

The mill was shown as a nameless grist and saw mill in the 1878 county atlas and it seemed to be part of the campus of Mount Saint Clemens College. At some point the mill passed into the hands of the Redemptorist Fathers who built a large college or seminary building on the hill overlooking the Dismal Mill site.

The mill is missing from the 1880 census of manufactures but the 1880 State business directory listed A. Brunsman as miller at Ilchester, while the 1887 issue listed Z. Duvall. This was after the burning of the much larger Dismal Mill on Ilchester Road near the present rail tunnel and steel bridge.

A photo of a stone mill appeared in a Baltimore *Sun* Sunday feature story about Ilchester on March 16, 1924, with the caption, "This old grist mill at Ilchester was built more than one and one-half centuries ago. It still has the original wooden machinery of that time. The miller is in his eighty-seventh year."

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#### ADDENDUM

The photo matches the surviving building, but in 1924 there was only one dormer, that one fitted up with the hoisting mechanism; today, used as a residence, there are three smaller dormers.

Celia M. Holland in *Old Homes and Families of Howard County, Maryland* wrote that the college or seminary was closed in 1979 and the entire campus sold to developer Michael A. Nibali who hoped to turn the collegiate structure into residential space. This project failed. In 1980, the Redemptorists sold to Nibali the small mill parcel of 1.779 acres (Deeds CMP 995:660). Subsequent owners of the mill lot were Leslie J. Deutsch in 1985, Stephan J. and Joyce Jenkins in 1988, and Peter G. Ruff in 1994. Ruff completed the conversion of the mill into a residence. The current owner as of 2001, Craig Phillips, took title in 1997 (Deeds 4109:349).

An article in the real estate section of the *Sun* on June 17, 2001, described the restoration efforts expended on the mill and noted that, starting in 1929, the mill had been the water pump house for the college and that Mr. Phillips still had the large pump in his basement. The building is built with dressed granite from the Patapsco region.... There is no documentary evidence to push the origin of this mill back to the 18th century. It was apparently never upgraded to use any of the "new process" devices of the 1870s or the roller mill system of the 1880s.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> McGrain, John W. *Molinography of Maryland*, ms. (Held at the Maryland State Archives.)



HD-739

Davis Grist Mill

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

03/12/05

NO SHPO

View NE. Shows Davis Grist Mill. Now  
log 8 converted to residence.





HO-739

Davis Grist Mill

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

03/12/05

MD-CHPO

View W.

2 of 8

Shows Davis  
residence.

Grist Mill now converted to



HO- 739

Davis Grist

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

03/21/05

MD SHPO

View W. Shows Davis Grist Mill now converted to  
3 of 8 Residence.



HO-739

Davis Grist Mill

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

03/12/05

MD SHPO

View S. shows Davis Grist Mill now converted to residence

4 of 8



HD-739

Davis Grist Mill

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

03/12/05

MDISHPO

View W. Shows path of Mill race and adjacent  
house.





H0-739

Davis Grist Mill

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

03/12/05

MD SHPO

View N. Shows interior.

6068



HD-739

Davis Grist Mill

Howard County, MD

Jennifer Goold

08/12/05

MD SHPO

View E. Shows basement level.

Tab 8



HO-739

Davis Grist Mill  
Howard County, MD

Jennifer Gould

02/12/05

MD SHPO

view W. Shows basement level.

Bob B

**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. HO 739

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Davis Mills

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Bonnie Branch Road, Ilchester Area ☐ not for publication

city, town Ellicott City ☒ vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state Maryland county Howard

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Please see continuation sheet.

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Please see continuation sheet. liber

street & number folio

city, town state

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title None

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. HO 739

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☒ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 6

Six distinct architectural features survive of the Davis Mills complex (designated here A through F); a seventh was recently destroyed in new construction (1998).

Feature A is a rough-cut, dry-laid granite revetment wall set at the south bank of Bonnie Branch. The surviving portion stands approximately four feet high by fifteen feet long. On a terrace above the slope descending to this wall stood the rough-cut granite foundation, now destroyed, of the southernmost of the two original Davis Mills.

Feature B is a rough-cut granite dam abutment standing on the north bank of Bonnie Branch. Portland cement has been employed to re-point the mortar joints--indicating a later renewal of the structure. Though its fragmentary character makes a definitive determination of the material of the dam itself problematic, like many other dams on the Patapsco--the Dismal Mill, the Patapsco Cotton Factory, the Ellicott Iron Rolling and Slitting Mill, and the Orange Grove Mill--this original dam was also probably built of wood braced against stone abutments.

Building C is the substantially altered mill building north of Bonnie Branch Road which probably dates to the renovations done to the mill complex between the mid-1860s and 1878. The principal portion of the building consists of two-story rough-cut granite walls with ashlar coins and lintels. Three bays of fenestration face Bonnie Branch Road, to the south, and two bays open on the first floor of the east. Outlining an addition to the north elevation extends a rough-cut granite wall approximately 3.5 feet high. To these stone elements a wooden roof with gables to the east and west has been added, incorporating the depth of both the principal structure and the addition to the north. The pitch is sufficient to accommodate three bays of dormer windows to the south and a large gable window to the east. A frame extension to the north expands the floor space of the upper level; it is open underneath, including a series of decks added to the east and north. In 1993, James Peirce, a volunteer ranger with the Patapsco

[Please see continuation sheet.]



## 8. Significance

Survey No. HO 739

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates before 1850, ca. 1870 Builder/Architect unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☒ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### Davis Mills

In contrast to the large-scale merchant milling operations established in the Patapsco Valley in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Joshua B. Davis set up a small milling enterprise for the local market alone. Built toward the end of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the Davis Grist and Saw mills served the needs of nearby residents for the local consumption of meal, flour, and lumber. As the nineteenth century wore on, the larger flour milling enterprises ceased providing these "country" services, and moved ultimately toward a consolidation of facilities in more convenient locations. In this respect, the Davis mills outlasted many of the larger merchant flour mills in the area (see, for example, the Bonnie Branch Mill, inventory number, HO 738, and the Ilchester Mill, inventory number HO 737, Howard County, and the Orange Grove Mill, inventory number BA 2808, Baltimore County). Increasing suburbanization of the region and improved distribution of pre-packaged products eliminated the demand for the Davis mill services in the early twentieth century.

George Ellicott, Jr. (1798-1869) sold this parcel to Joshua B. Davis from larger tracts of land Ellicott had acquired in the 1830s (Baltimore 235/39, Anne Arundel 22/627, and Howard 1/291). The parcel lay mostly to the north side of Bonnie Branch, bisected by Bonnie Branch road. Some time before 1850, when the "Joshua Davis water mill" was listed in the United States Census (McGrain, *Molinography*), Davis here built a grist mill and a saw mill on the north and south sides of Bonnie Branch, separated by Bonnie Branch road, and just west of the intersection of a now-abandoned road to the south. The 1860 Martenet Map of Howard County shows "J. Davis Gst. & S. Mill" in operation adjacent each other on the north and south sides of Bonnie Branch, west of the intersection. The mills

[Please see continuation sheet.]



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. HO 739

Please see continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property four

1 : 24,000

Quadrangle name Savage

Quadrangle scale 7.5 Series

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries of the site follow those of Howard County Tax Map 31, parcels 162, 166, and 803, comprising the site of the original mill, the remains of the two dams, and the two structures related to the enlarged operations.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 1. Form Prepared By

name/title Henry K. Sharp

organization None

date 28 October 1998

street & number 100 South Street West

telephone 804/295-0140

city or town Charlottesville

state Virginia

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2029

Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Section 4.1

Howard County Tax Map 31, Parcel 166, north of Bonnie Branch Road:  
Craig R. Phillips  
4450 Bonnie Branch Road  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Howard County Tax Map 31, Parcels 162 and 803, south of Bonnie Branch Road:  
Michael G. Mullendore and Susan E. Mullendore  
6154 Hanover Road  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Section 5.1

Howard County Circuit Court  
8360 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Howard County Tax Map 31, Parcel 166, north of Bonnie Branch Road, property of  
Craig R. Phillips:  
Liber 4109 Folio 349.

Howard County Tax Map 31, Parcels 162 and 803, south of Bonnie Branch Road,  
property of Michael G. Mullendore and Susan E. Mullendore:  
Liber 3592 Folio 228, and,  
Liber 4176 Folio 132.

Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Section 7.1

State Park, reported that this structure consisted only of foundations and standing walls; its transformation into a residence has occurred since that time (Peirce, p. 52).

Building D--or some portion of it--is also evidently a product of the mid-1860s or 1870s expansion of the complex. An English basement of rough-cut granite with ashlar courses supports a frame dwelling, now sheathed in painted asbestos shingles. The facade addresses the stone mill building to the east, and contains three bays of fenestration on the main level with two bays of shed-roofed dormers in the gable above. This descends on the west to a shed extension which meets the ground level at the rear, where the hillside was excavated to create building space. Similarities in the character of the stonework, best seen in building D on the south and east cellar elevations, and that of the mill (building C) suggest a contemporary construction date for both structures.

Structure E is the masonry dam constructed as part of the mid-1860s or 1870s expansion of the complex. Raised of ashlar granite blocks, the dam has evidently been repaired with rough-cut granite and a cap of poured concrete, which replaced the upper courses of stone.

Feature F is the extensive head race cut into the hillside to the west and north above buildings C and D. Though its original junction with the upper mill pool has been destroyed in the successive repairs and widenings made to Bonnie Branch Road, the headrace opens at the same elevation as the pool, and conveyed water apparently in an open channel to the mill.

Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Section 8.1

appear again in this configuration on the Reynolds' Military map of 1863, though the proprietor and type of mill are unidentified. Similarly, the Schofield lithograph of the Patapsco Valley, dated to the early 1860s, shows two adjacent but unidentified structures up the valley of Bonnie Branch; these may be representations of the Davis Mills. James Peirce recognized a foundation on this site in March of 1993, and noted that sixty feet upstream were two ten-by-ten foot dam abutments (Peirce, p. 52). Although he attributes these ruins to an earlier mill, it is almost certain that what he observed were the ruins of the initial configuration of the Davis Mills--a frame structure on a stone foundation, and a frame dam secured by stone abutments. The paired mill on the north side of Bonnie Branch Road was probably replaced in a later and more costly renovation to the mill complex.

Substantial changes to this mill site occurred over the next decade and a half (from the early 1860s), and these are depicted in the Hopkins Atlas of Howard County. By the 1878 publishing date of the atlas, a large mill pool had been filled farther upstream of the former dam, and a head race excavated across Bonnie Branch Road to a new mill building. The site was again marked "S.M. [and] G.M.," for saw mill and grist mill, though it is not clear whether the new structure incorporated both functions; the old building south of the branch remains on the map. Incidentally, the new dam was built far enough upstream to clear the pool of the smaller original dam, so the earlier mill could have remained in operation as originally configured, with the new facility operating concurrently from the water fall of the new dam.

The remains of these expanded installations evidence a substantially larger investment: the new dam was masonry rather than wood, and it still stands. In addition, the new mill building itself was also of masonry construction, and was served by extensive head and tail races, cut into the hillside to the north. It is now incorporated into a private residence. A frame dwelling on a stone foundation stands on the same lot, to the west of the new mill. These three structures--the old mill, new mill, and dwelling--appear on the Road System of Baltimore County Map, executed in the second quarter of the twentieth century, while the road south from the mills was still in use.

The growth and prosperity of the Davis grist and saw mill is in a sense a contrary trend in the Patapsco Valley. This was a small-scale operation, dedicated to what the Ellicott family called "country work"-- grain grinding operations for local farmers and local consumption. The merchant flour mills in the valley operated on a large scale, producing vast quantities for national and

Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Section 8.2

international sale. As these mills grew and professionalized, they ceased providing country services, which the Ellicott mills had done as an additional service during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Consequently, a market for these local grain grinding and saw-milling operations existed throughout the nineteenth century until a number of economic and social developments made them obsolete. The shift of populations from agricultural to urban and suburban economies, and the development of integrated transportation systems--first of the railroad, and then of highway based transport--lead to the mass production and marketing of commercial products. Among these were lumber and foodstuffs, often produced far from the location of consumption, and at the end of the nineteenth century, produced in factories which need not rely either on water power or the remote and difficult locations water power required. Twentieth-century farmers and suburban villa residents had less use for local mills of this type as finished products became increasingly available and inexpensive on local store shelves.

Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Section 9.1

Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of Howard County Maryland*. Philadelphia: F. Bourquin's Steam Lithographic Press, 1878.

McGrain, John W. *Molinography in Maryland Series*, Howard County notebook. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, MSA SC 4300, loc 02/04/14.

Peirce, James. *Patapsco Valley Mill Sites*. Research Notes, Howard County Historical Society Library, 1993.

Howard County Historical Society Library:

John Schofield, *Panoramic View of the Scenery on the Patapsco, Ellicotts Mills, Md.* [key]

Library of Congress, Geography and Maps Division:

*Martenet's Map of Howard County*, 1860, G3843 .H6 1860 .M3;

*Raynolds' Military Map, Baltimore County, Maryland*, 1863, G3843 .B3 1863 .R3.

*Road System of Baltimore County*, [ca. 1925-50]; G 3843 .B3P2 19-- .M3.

Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan  
Statewide Historic Contexts

Geographic Organization:

Piedmont

Chronological Development/Periods:

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 10) Agricultural-Industrial Transition | A.D. 1815-1870 |
| 11) Industrial/Urban Dominance         | A.D. 1870-1930 |

Historic Period Themes:

- 1) Agriculture
- 3) Economic

Resource Type:

Category: Site (ruins and buildings)

Historic Environment: Rural

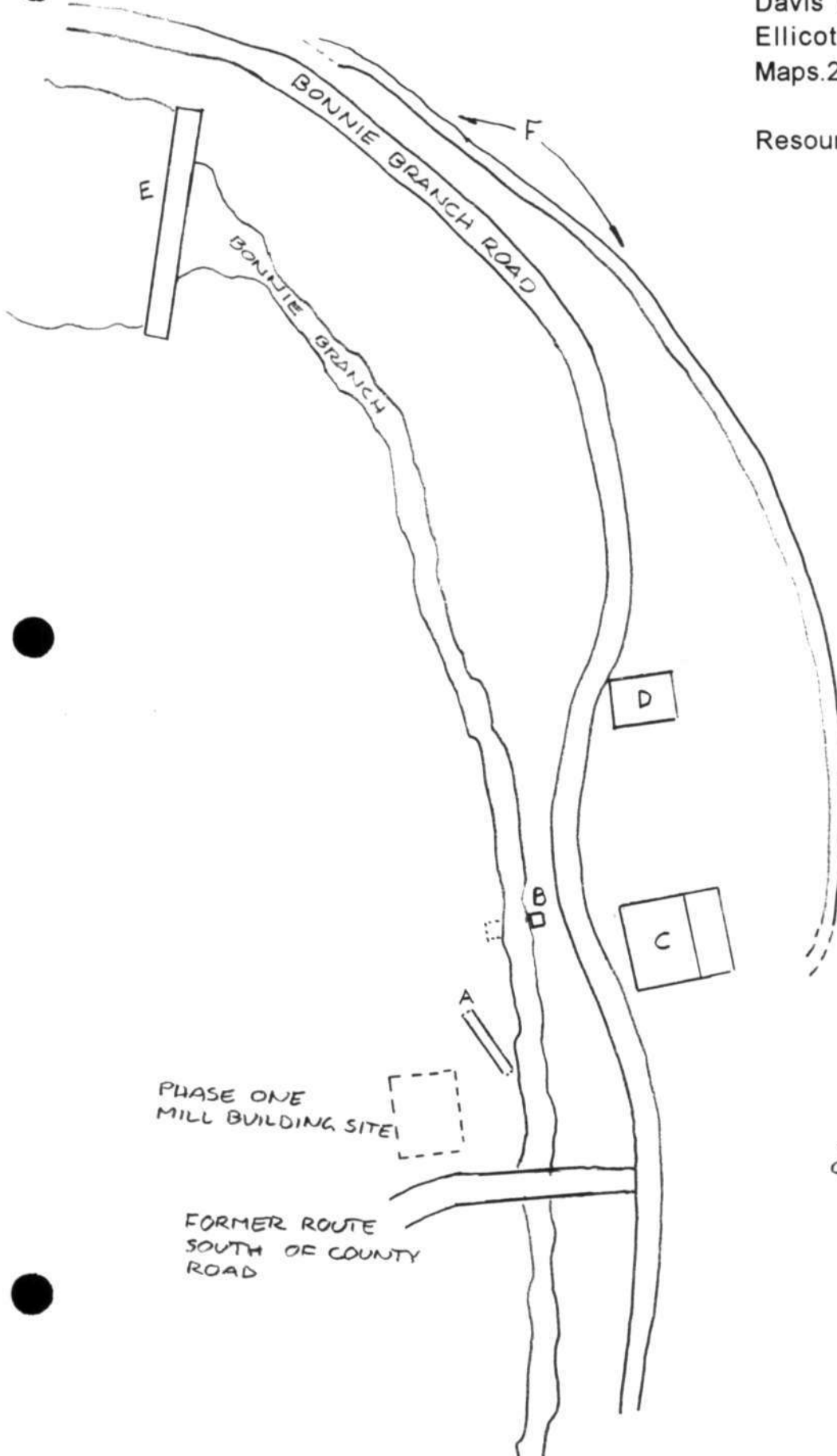
Historic Functions and Uses: Grist Mill and Saw Mill.

Known Design Sources: None



Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Ellicott City Vicinity, Ilchester area  
Maps.2

Resource Site Plan



NOT TO SCALE  
1998  
H, K, SHARP

- A: REVETMENT FOR PHASE ONE MILL BUILDING
- B: PHASE ONE DAM ABUTMENT
- C: PHASE TWO(?) MILL BUILDING
- D: PHASE TWO(?) DWELLING
- E: PHASE TWO DAM
- F: PHASE TWO HEADRACE

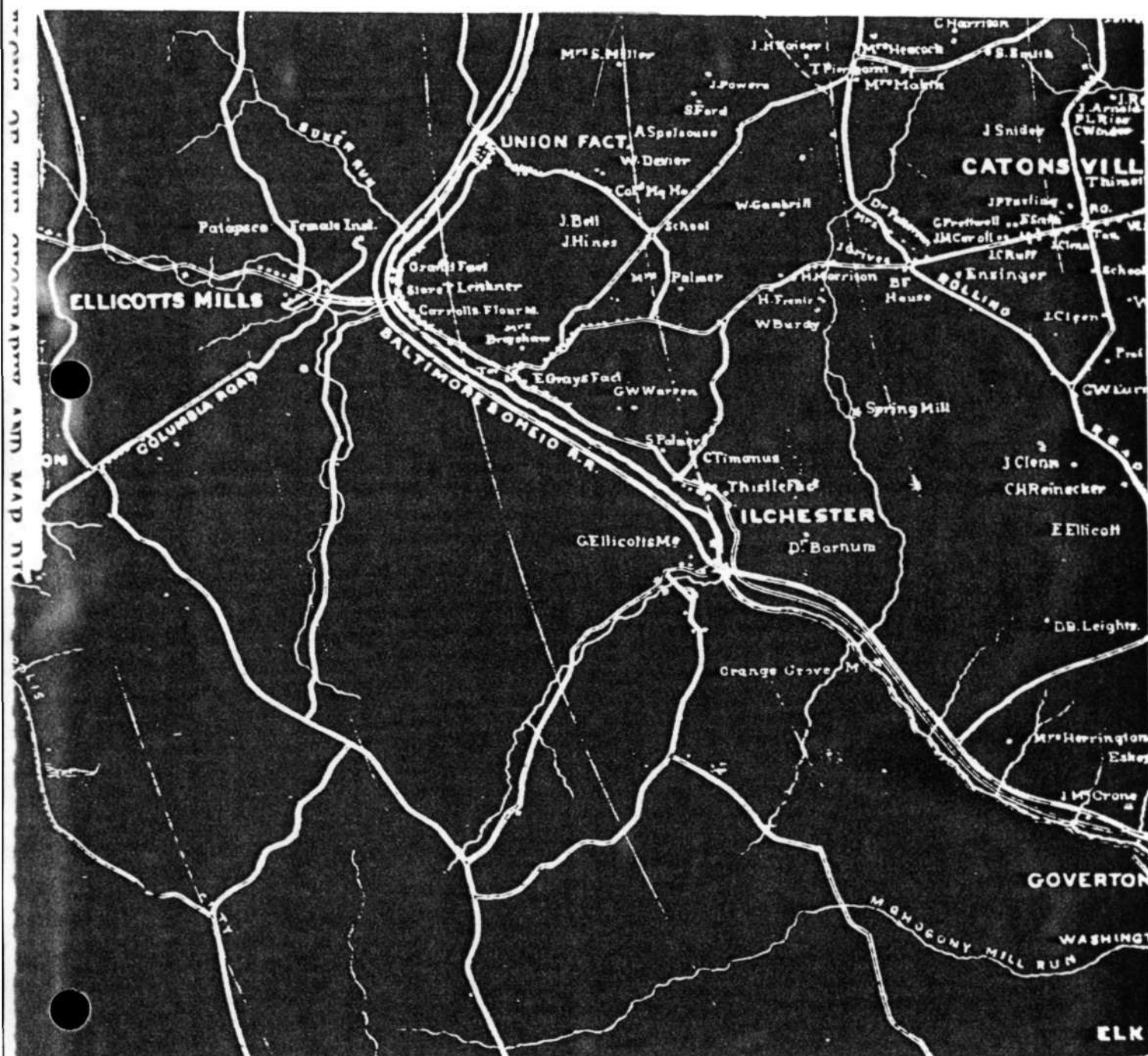
Inventory Number HO 739  
 Davis Mills, Howard County  
 Ellicott City Vicinity, Ilchester area  
 Maps.3

*Martenet's Map of Howard County, 1860,*  
 Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Geography and Maps Division: G 3843 .H6  
 1860 .M3.



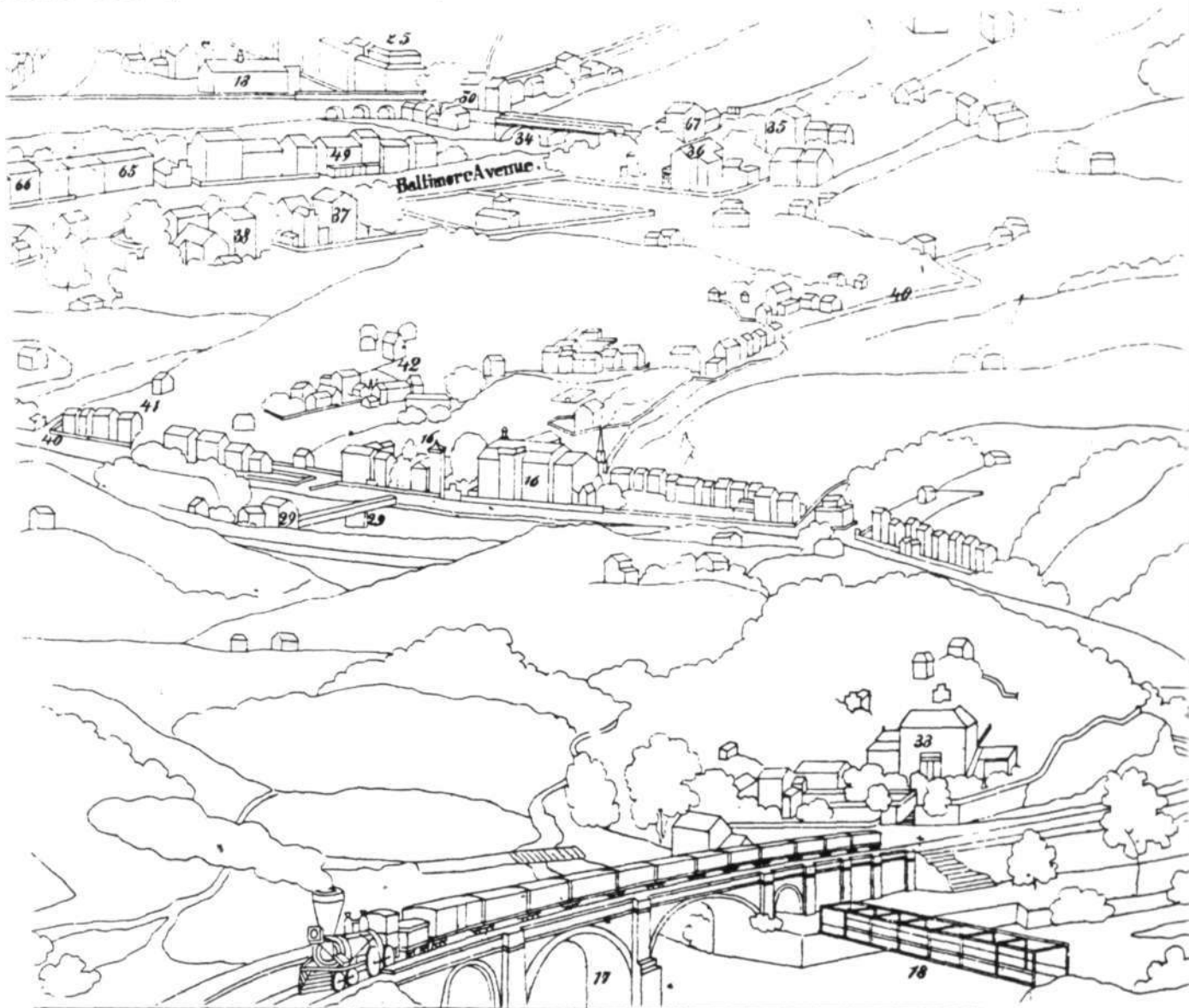
## Maps.4

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Geography and Maps Division: G 3843 .B3  
1863 .R3.



Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Ellicott City Vicinity, Ilchester area  
Maps.5

John Schofield, *Panoramic View of the Scenery on the Patapsco, Ellicotts Mills, Md.* [key],  
Howard County Historical Society Library, Ellicott City, Maryland.

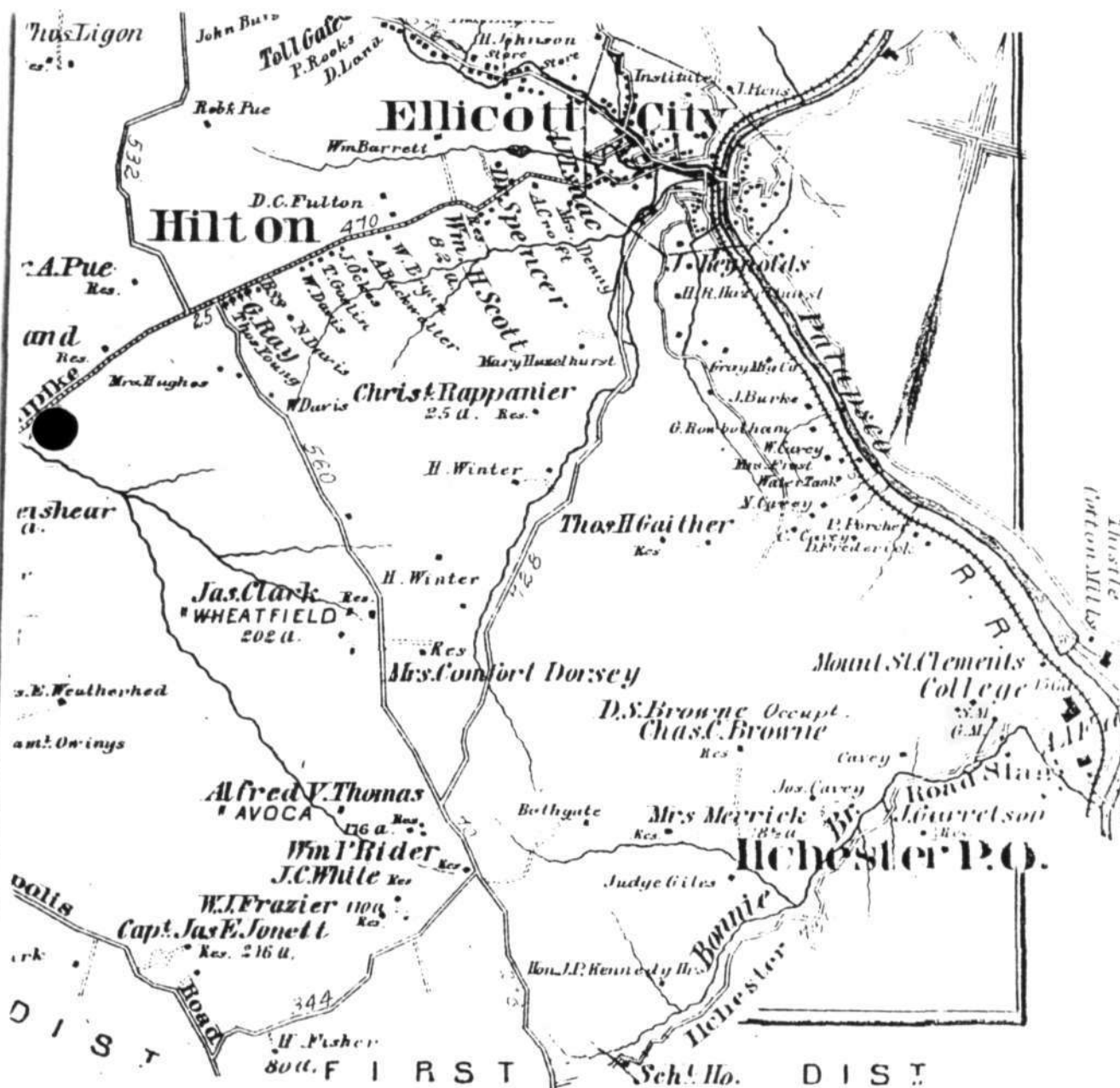


The two unidentified adjacent structures appearing in the valley of Bonnie Branch may represent the Davis Mill complex.



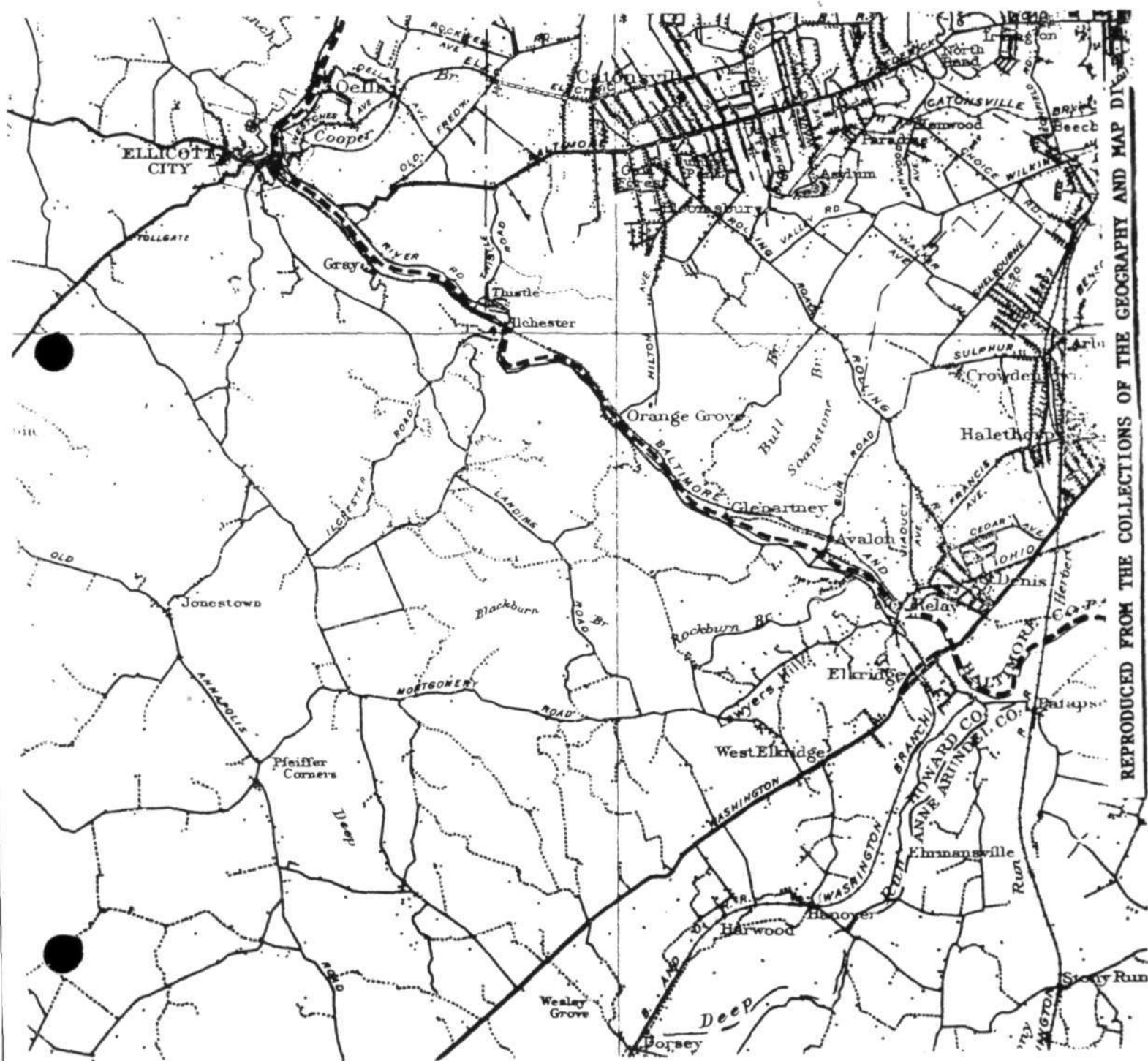
Inventory Number HO 739  
 Davis Mills, Howard County  
 Ellicott City Vicinity, Ilchester area  
 Maps.6

G. M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Howard County Maryland* (Philadelphia: F. Bourquin's  
 Steam Lithographic Press, 1878), p. 15.



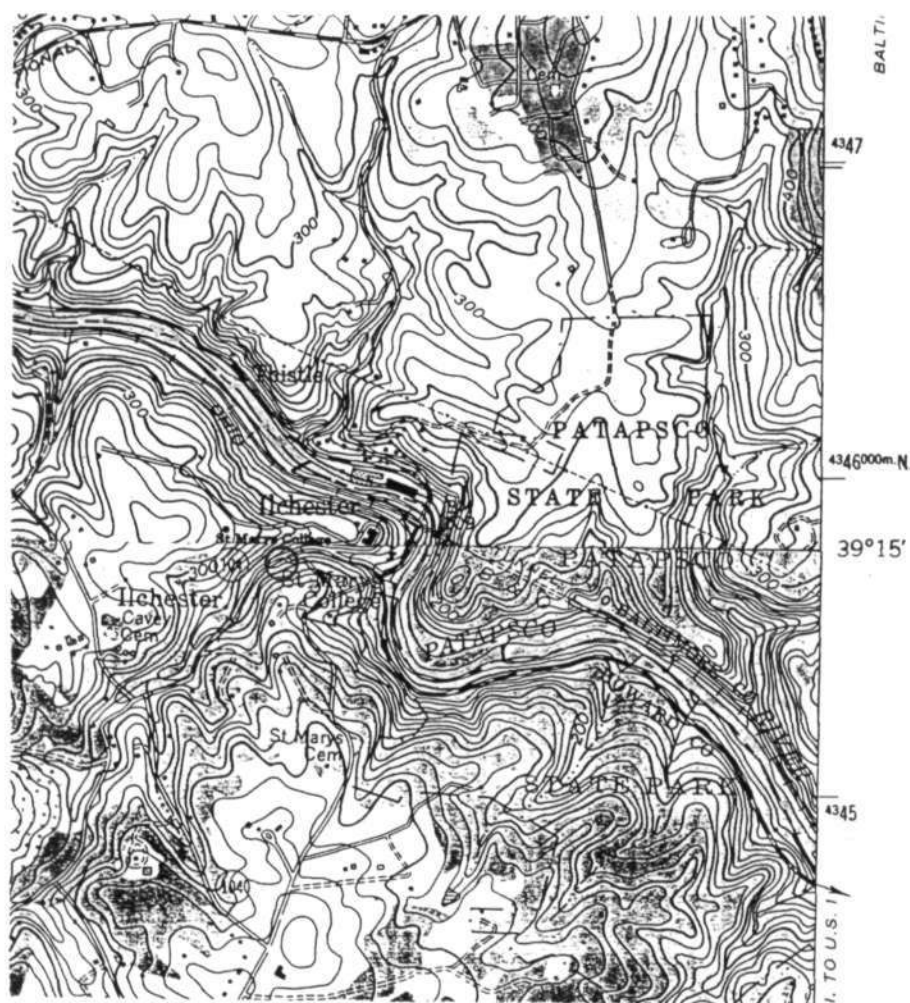
Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Ellicott City Vicinity, Ilchester area  
Maps.7

Road System of Baltimore County, [ca. 1925-50], Library of Congress,  
Washington, D.C., Geography and Maps Division: G 3843 .B3P2 19-- M3.

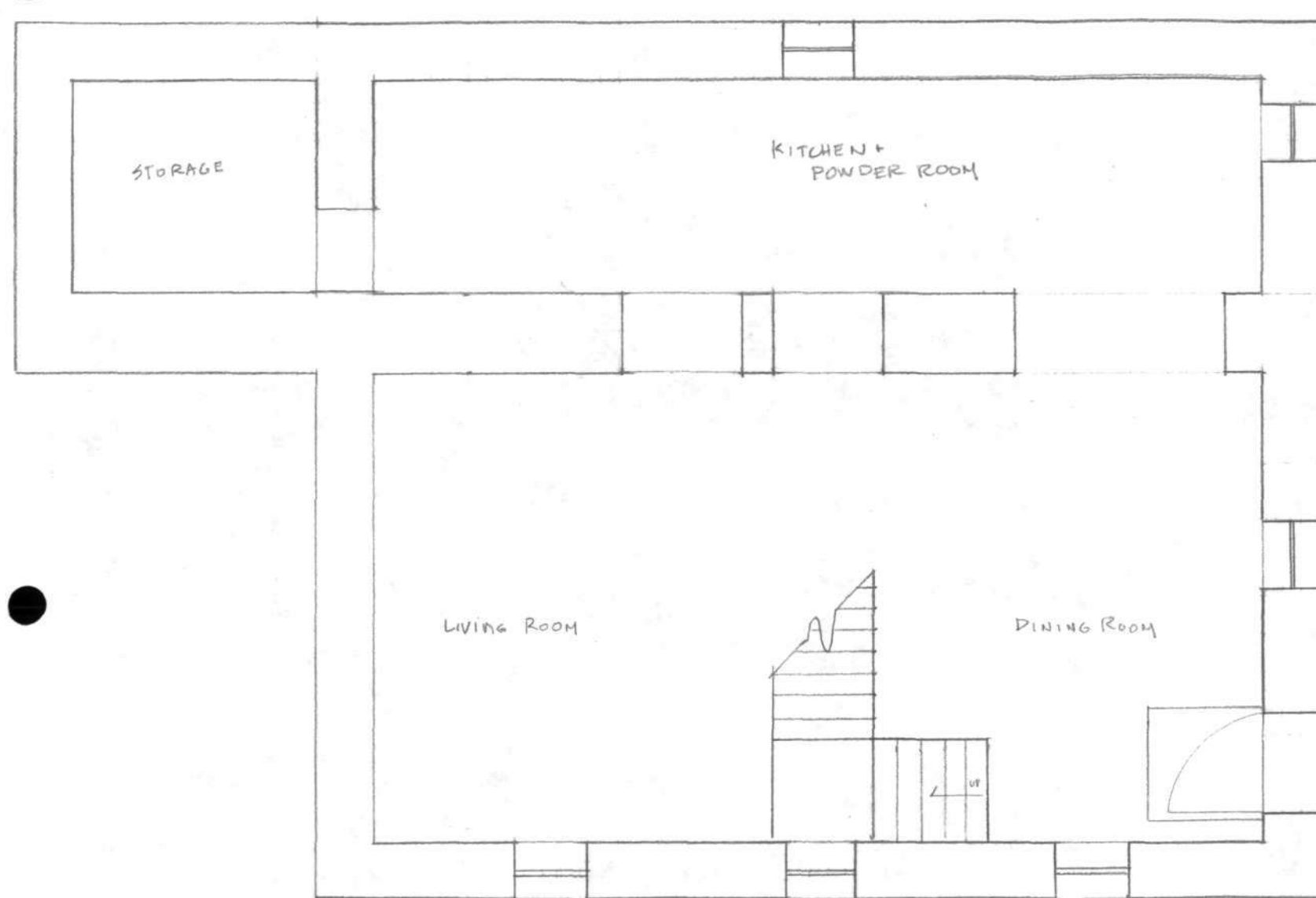


Inventory Number HO 739  
Davis Mills, Howard County  
Ellicott City Vicinity, Ilchester area  
Maps.1

U.S. Geological Survey  
Ellicott City 7.5 Quadrangle  
Savage 7.5 Quadrangle



H0-739



DAVIS GRIST MILL (H0-739) 1st Floor

NTS

J. GOULD

03/05



HO-739 Davis 6nst M11

# Rambles In The Rugged

**Wildcat And Deer Formerly Roamed Through Wonderland Near Baltimore Which Has Earl's Name**

By DR. HENRY J. DEBENIST.

A LAND of forest and stream, "of mountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills," ever rolling toward the lower levels of the Patapsco river, covered with the noble growth of centuries. Deep ravine and high cliff bring variety to the restricted view; and at the foot of each lies always a brook rushing over polished stones; or the more silent water of a spring, pulsing its way through soft grasses and mosses.

On all sides there is a setting of green, and above an Italian blue sky, for the distance fading into the gray mists of the hills of Howard. Views there are near and views there are far. Near at hand is the volcanic-torn debris of the Water Gap, where the interior species of the earth met its cooling, and it is asunder, leaving huge dykes of lava in the cliffs it had torn from the earlier granite coverings.

## ELICOTT CITY IN VISTA.

Far off one sees at the end of a long vista the smoke of the chimneys of Elicott City, apparently buried in an endless forest. Southeastward, in wide expanse spread the table-lands of distant Anne Arundel, and, perchance, one may glimpse on an unusually clear day the towers of the wireless station at Annapolis.

Everywhere are fields of corn and wheat, gardens and orchards, with here and there a vineyard on the steep slope of some sunny hill. In the open fields are ovals and oblongs of woodland, where the soil is too stony to permit profitable cultivation.

Such is Hechester, a wonderland of babbling rivulets seeking to enter the heart of the Patapsco, and of "forests solemn canopies."

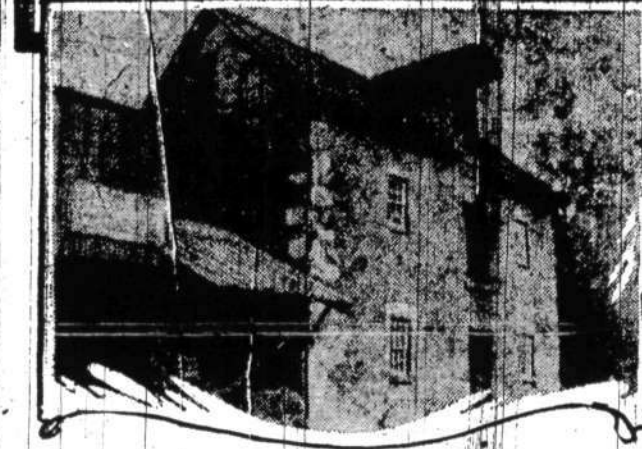
Calm and cool as a pool  
In the river;  
Mirrored on its breast are seen  
The branching oaks of green,  
And their reflect their shadow

## PORT OF ELKBRIDGE.

When the Elicott brothers started on their memorable voyage from Philadelphia in 1772 to found the milling village of what is now Elicott City, on the Patapsco river, 10 miles from Baltimore, the most convenient place for the unloading of their equipment, men, merchandise, mechanical and agricultural implements, household goods and the wagons and horses to draw them was at the flourishing port of Elkbridge, four miles from their ultimate destination.

There was already a road constructed to Dorsey's Forge, at Avonlon, about a mile away, but beyond that point they entered a wild and difficult country and were obliged to build roadways and bridges for themselves, over which their light could pass.

On both sides of the river arose high, wooded hills, shutting off the sunlight



This old grist mill at Hechester was built more than one and one-half centuries ago. It still has the original wooden machinery of that time. The miller is in his eighty-seventh year.

at all hours of the day, and from the steep, almost unsurmountable sides of these hills poured brooks, streamlets, waterfalls and cascades. At several points, jutting far into the bed of the river and blocking progress, were ledges and points of rock, through and around which the caravan was obliged to find a way, with toil and difficulty.

The whole aspect of the region was one of extreme wildness, and of inhabitants there were none along the bottom lands.

## NAME OF ELCHESTER.

After much labor they reached a place where the waters, in ages past, had broken through the hills and made a water gap. Everywhere there were dykes and seams of a lava-like rock, thrust forward through the surface and disturbing the face of Nature in a wonderful manner. This place was called Hechester, after Joseph, earl of

that name who married into the Ridout family, of Annapolis.

At a spot, just below where the old railway station at Hechester stood, they were barred from further progress by a wide and tumbling brook (the Bonnie Branch), and, with this surmounted by a bridge, they were compelled, by the projection of rocky cliffs into the stream bed, to dismantle their outfit and proceed by horse and manpower, leaving their heavy wagons behind until a road could be made.

Crowbars, picks and axes were brought into service and a pathway was dug, over which much of the machinery was transported by wheelbarrows and manpower to its destination.

## COUNTRY'S WILDNESS.

Beautiful as is the region of the Water Gap today, it must have been much more so in its primeval state, for in the construction of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, the sides of the cliffs

Patterson Viaduct, named for the first timore and Ohio Railroad, is shown thus in 1831.

have been blasted away, exposing large surfaces of a yellowish rock.

The wildness of this country was such at this date that deer were seen frequently and at night the call of the wildcat to its mate was heard; while a footstep from the pathway would cause a flutter of wings and the whirr of the pheasant from the nest in the bracken.

The impression given by the foregoing is that the entire region, at the beginning of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, was a wilderness and uninhabited. This was not the case, or rather the wilderness was only in the immediate valley of the river and its precipitous sides, where cultivation was impossible and the earth unfruitful. The uplands were divided into farms and the population was probably greater than it was after the Civil War, if one may judge from the frequency of the ruins and cellars of small houses.

## TWO ESTATES.

On the Baltimore county side were two estates, "Brother's Expectation" and the "Tanyard." The first was patented by John Hollingsworth in 1688 and comprised 350 acres immediately above the "Thistle Milling Village." The other was a much larger estate, running from the western edge of "Brother's Expectation" to the vicinity of Elicott's Mills and across to the north of the New Frederick road.

The oldest dwelling house in the region is on "Brother's Expectation." Originally a stone house of four rooms, it has been so added to from time to time by its several owners that little of the original remains.

The kitchen still has the large open fireplace of the period, with the crane and pot hangers.

In another room are two high carved

mantels, in the ye of a per chimneys half of fireplace back built celled constructed brick tro and give

SU  
In 171 William "Brother day it Smiths, I ers.

Zenas

This is the "WRINKLE PROOF" Iron!

HO. 739

# Evolution of Ilchester

prietor of Barnum's Hotel, probably the most noted hostelry that Baltimore ever has had. Mr. Barnum used the land as a market garden for the hotel and the house as a residence for himself and a favorite guest, which lived and traveled everywhere with him, the animal running by the side of his buggy when driving.

The "Tanyard," patented by the Balderston family, one of the early names of Baltimore and perpetuated in Balderston street, has long since been divided into a number of farms, the largest of them, after passing from Michael Balderston to his niece, Ruth Timanus, is now owned by the heirs of the late Cumberland Dugan. The old house has long since disappeared, having been absorbed into a modern one.

## HOME OF JURISTS.

On the south side of the river in Ann Arundel county (Howard county since 1861) one of the notable places is that formerly belonging to Luther Martin, the noted jurist of Revolutionary days. His kitchen still is intact, having been built into the present mansion. In it hangs an engraved portrait of the jurist by Edwin, commemorative of the fact that he once lived here.

The late Mrs. Charles White had an adjoining farm with a beautiful view of the city and the Chesapeake Bay, while, looking westward, ranges of wooded hills arose one after another for miles and miles.

In post Civil War days this locality was a favorite one for the summer residences of the judiciary of this city, contending for the honor with Lawyers Hill at the Relay. The late Judges William Fell Giles, William A. Stewart and William Merrick all had residences overlooking Ilchester, as did Dr. Bernard B. Brown, a well-known physician. Mr. Ernest Morrison owned the estate now occupied by the Donaldson School.

These families comprised the community and all had fine residences.

## MEANS OF ACCESS.

The present idea of difficult access is widely different from what it was in the year 1750, when the main trail for this entire region toward the East came from the Old Annapolis road, six miles away, along the Bonnie Branch to Ilchester, crossed the Patuxent river and passing through the Patuxent State Park, finally found entrance into the Rolling Road between Catonsville and Elbridge.

First a trail, then a wagon road, it persisted until comparatively recently.

It was not until the Ellicott brothers opened the "New Frederick road," from Baltimore to the Mills, thence westward to Carroll's manor, that there was any direct communication with the hub of the State.

## PROSPERITY'S BEGINNING.

With the building of the Baltimore and Ohio railway, 1828 to 1830, an era of prosperity began for Ilchester. A cotton print mill was established shortly thereafter on the north bank of the river called the "Thistle" factory, from the home of the owners in Scotland, Messrs. George and William Morris, Scotchmen, came from Philadelphia in 1831 to conduct it, and in 1847 built the stone structure, still used, with a village around it.

Many of the operatives came from Wales. Many of the houses are so typically Welsh in appearance that without the exercise of any imagination, standing in the main street, one might think they were somewhere in North Wales, even to the coloring of the stone walls. Since the days of George Morris and his brother-in-law, William Wallace Spence, the mill has had many vicissitudes, but is being operated again successfully.

## BRIDGE AND FLOOD.

When the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad built its first bridge at Ilchester to afford passage over the river to its trains it planned a stone viaduct of great strength and solidity, which the engineers considered would last for all times. In the great cloudburst of 1808, when Ellicott's Mills was partly destroyed, this viaduct was carried away by the rushing waters and disappeared, save one abutment.

The only memory of the Patterson viaduct, named after the early president of the railroad, is a lithograph by Swett, made in 1831, which shows quite an imposing structure, and on its rails are two open carriages, drawn by horses, giving some idea of how our ancestors of less than 100 years ago traveled.

Over Ilchester, on the Howard county side, stand the large buildings of the Seminary of St. Mary, of the Redemptorist Fathers. On their grounds, near the roadway, is the old granite house of George Ellicott, surrounded by a large wooden edifice used as a preparatory school; while on the height above are the brick dwellings of the "Upper House."

This property was acquired by the Redemptorist Order in 1866. The cornerstone of the "college" was laid in September, 1867, with impressive cere-

monies; but the wooden addition to the Ellicott building was not built until 1872. Around these several buildings is a well-kept farm, with gardens, fields and vineyards, attended by the Brothers.

## POWER PLANT AND ROADS.

A quarter of a mile eastward, in the bed of the Patuxent, is the unique electric light dam and powerhouse of the Consolidated Gas and Electric Light Company, of this city. It is built under and in the bed of the stream, and is operated by turbine engines. It is the only one of this construction in Maryland and well worth a visit. Power and light are supplied from it to the Ellicott City and Catonsville neighborhoods.

The great need of the Ilchester region, especially that part of it in Baltimore county, is modern roads. For upward of 60 years not a thoroughfare has been constructed through it, and the Beautiful Patuxent State Park of 1,000 acres is entirely inaccessible to the people of the State, not having a single vehicular roadway into it. Were it laid open it would be a joy to thousands.

(Advertisement.)

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H0-739 Davis Grist Mill



HO-739



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NOVEMBER 1998

MARYLAND SHPO

FEATURE A, VIEW SOUTHEAST

1/7



HO 739

DAVIS MILLS

HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

HENRY K. SHARP

MARCH 1997

MARYLAND SHPO

PHASE ONE MILL BUILDING SITE (VIEW SOUTHWEST  
(NOW DESTROYED))

2/7





HO 739

DAVIS MILLS

HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

HENRY K SHARP

NOVEMBER 1998

MARYLAND SHPO

FEATURE B, VIEW SOUTHEAST

3/7



HO 739

DAVIS MILLS

HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

HENRY K. SHARP

MARCH 1992

MARYLAND SHPO

BUILDING C, FOREGROUND. BUILDING D BACKGROUND  
VIEW NORTHWEST

4/7



HO 739

DAVIS MILLS

HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

HENRY K SHARP

NOVEMBER 1998

MARYLAND SHPO

BUILDING D, FOREGROUND, BUILDING C BACKGROUND  
VIEW EAST

5/7



HO 239

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HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

HENRY K. SHARP

NOVEMBER 1998

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STRUCTURE E, VIEW SOUTH

6/7





HO 739

DAVIS MILLS

HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND

HENRY F. SHARP

JUNE 1949

MARYLAND SHED (FILED WITH HO 737)

FEATURE 4, AT REAR STONE WALL, VIEW NORTH-  
WEST

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